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NOTES  
ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF  
COTTON AND  
COTTON MANUFACTURES  
IN SOUTH CAROLINA





# *AN ADDRESS*

DELIVERED BEFORE  
THE

## COTTON MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION *of* SOUTH CAROLINA

AT  
GROVE PARK INN, ASHEVILLE, N. C.  
*June 19, 1926*

*By*  
J. RION McKISSICK  
of Greenville, S. C.



TO  
**CAPT. ELLISON A. SMYTH**  
A FOREMOST PIONEER IN THE  
NEW ERA OF COTTON MANUFACTURING  
IN SOUTH CAROLINA  
A VALUED FRIEND  
WHO SUGGESTED THE SUBJECT  
OF THIS ADDRESS

## ADDRESS

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I COUNT it an honor to speak to this Association, and for it I am deeply grateful. However, I beg you to believe that I prepared what I shall have to say on the assumption that Mr. Fairfax Harrison and others were to be the oratorical "Big Berthas" of this occasion, and I only an air rifle.

Since I know nothing about the technical and practical phases of cotton manufacturing, I have chosen the only possible subject I can touch upon in connection with it, the historical phase. I have had neither the time nor the information sufficient to enable me to present here a connected narrative of the development of the cotton industry in South Carolina, so I shall confine myself to some notes on cotton and cotton manufacturing in the Palmetto State in the earlier period. These have been collected from various sources and represent only a small fraction of the vast mass of data on the cotton industry in South Carolina, although the history of this highly important factor in the making of South Carolina has never been adequately and fully written.

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By way of preface to an article on cotton and cotton manufacturing in DeBow's Review in 1852, its author said:

"It seems to be with historians as with mankind in general; they pay more attention to the vices, follies, foibles, and even the crimes of men, than to those things which constitute the elements of human happiness and human progress in civilization. . . . It is not until now that historians have begun to discover that the real history of the world consists, not so much in an account of the wars and revolutions of nations, as in that of those products of the earth, and those of man's ingenuity, which constitute the wealth of nations, determine their social conditions and character and shape their institutions and laws. The legitimate objects of the historian are those things which build up a nation, and not those which pull it down. . . . It is easy enough to find out from historians what wars certain nations carried on, at the expense of the lives of millions, and what horrible crimes their kings and ministers committed, but we look in vain in them for any precise knowledge of the arts, sciences, and the industrial pursuits of any nation. If they mention these things, it is only by mere accident."

So far as I can learn, here is the first recorded reference to cotton in the Carolinas. In a pamphlet dated 1666, and entitled "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina on the Coast of Florida," the writer, in speaking of the Cape Fear settlements made only two years before, says, "They have indigo, tobacco very good, and cotton wool."

Of course, this was really in North Carolina, although at that time the colony of Carolina had not been divided. Then there was lacking that dissimilarity in many things between the two Carolinas which began to develop later. An apt illustration of this difference is in the story of the North Carolina countryman who, when asked what North Carolina should do when the Nullification excitement was at its height and when it seemed that South Carolina would go to war against the Union, replied, "Let South Carolina nullify, secesh, and be d——d!"

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Planting cotton began soon after the second permanent settlement of South Carolina by the English in 1670. In that year, Florence O'Sullivan, for whom Sullivan's Island is named, wrote Lord Ashley, one of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, that "the land in the colony produced anything that was put into it, for they had tried it with corn, tobacco, cotton and other provisions, which did well, when the lateness of the season was considered."

Gov. Whitmarsh B. Seabrook, of South Carolina, in his "Memoir on the Cotton Plant," expresses the belief that the seed of short staple cotton was originally introduced in this country from the Mediterranean. He says that Peter Purry, leader of a company of early Swiss emigrants to South Carolina, is represented to have brought with him, among other seeds, that of cotton, "This, and a paper of the same material, received by the trustees for the settlement of Georgia, from Philip Miller, of Chelsea, England, it can scarcely be questioned, were from the Mediterranean." In a pamphlet entitled "American Husbandry," published in London in 1775, the writer remarks: "The cotton cultivated in our colonies is of the Turkey kind. On the other hand, it must be supposed, from the language of their historian, that the Cape Fear emigrants, who began the growing of the gossypium only two years after they had established their settlements, were provided with seed from Barbadoes."



When Joseph West was appointed the third governor of Carolina in 1669 by the Lords Proprietors, he was instructed while at Barbadoes to supply himself with "Cotton seed, Indigo seed, Ginger Roots, which roots you are to carry planted in a tubb of earth, that they may not dye before your arrivall at Port Royall." Two of the objects of this experimental farm at Port Royal, which, as has been observed, preceded by more than two centuries those instituted by the State of South Carolina not many decades ago, were "to furnish seeds for sale to intending settlers wherewith to begin their own agricultural operations, and to ascertain for the common benefit the proper crops suitable to the climate and soil and the right seasons for planting and cultivating this new region."

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In Wilson's account of the Province of Carolina in America, published in 1682, it is stated that "cotton of the Cyprus and Malta sort grows well, and a good plenty of the seed is sent thither."

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In 1708 Gov. Nathaniel Johnson reported to the royal government that Carolina was importing cotton goods from the West Indies.

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In 1724 South Carolinians were trading with the West Indies, bartering provisions, lumber, staves and naval stores for sugar, rum, molasses, coffee, cotton, and Spanish gold and coin. At the same time they were sending some rice, hides, deerskins, tar and pitch to New England in exchange for flour, salt fish, fruit, beer and cider.

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In the journal of Eliza Lucas, later the mother of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, who when only eighteen years old, was entrusted with the management of the planting interests in South Carolina of her father, governor of Antigua, is the following entry: "July 1, 1739, wrote to my father today a very long letter on his plantation affairs—on the pains I had taken to bring the indigo, ginger, cotton, lucerne and casada to perfection, and that I had greater hopes from the indigo than any other."

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Among the exports of Charles Town from November, 1747, to November, 1748, were included seven bags of cotton wool, valued

at three pounds, eleven shillings, five pence per bag. In 1754 some cotton was again exported from South Carolina.

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In 1774 the colonial assembly of South Carolina passed an act for the encouragement of production of various articles and allowed a bounty for producing cotton, to wit, about three-fourths of a cent "for every pound of neat, well-cleared, merchantable cotton, the growth of this province."

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The first Provincial Congress of South Carolina, held in January, 1775, recommended to the inhabitants that they raise cotton, but little practical attention was paid to the recommendation. A small quantity only was produced for domestic manufacture.

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Dr. Alexander Hewat, in his historical account of South Carolina published in 1777, says that cotton, "though not of importance enough to have occupied the whole attention of the colonists, might, nevertheless, in conjunction with other staples, have been rendered profitable and useful."

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According to one writer, the first bag of cotton sold in South Carolina was purchased in 1784 by John Teasdale from Bryan Cape, then a factor in Charleston, and the first bag of the cotton wool exported from that city to Liverpool arrived on January 20, 1785, on the ship *Diana*, and was consigned to J. and J. Teasdale and Company.

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In 1784 a vessel which carried eight bales of cotton from the United States to Liverpool was seized in that port on the ground that so large a quantity of cotton could not be produced in this country.

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George Washington wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1789 that it was said that in Georgia and South Carolina "the cotton may be made of a most excellent quality, and in such abundant quantities as to prove a more profitable species of agriculture than any other crop. The increase of that new raw material, and the introduction of the late improved machines to abridge labor, must be of almost infinite consequences to the prosperity of the United States."

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Secretary of the Treasury Woodbury in 1836 reported to Congress that South Carolina produced 1,500,000 pounds of cotton in

1791 and that in the same year Georgia produced 500,000. According to his figures, Georgia apparently did not surpass South Carolina in cotton production until 1826, while Alabama and Mississippi did not take the lead of the rest of the States until 1834. From the close of the War of the Revolution until well into the next century, South Carolina and Georgia produced more than half the cotton crop of the United States.

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A writer in DeBow's Review in 1853 declared that the following story of the origin of the cotton gin was well authenticated, since it was related by Eli Whitney himself: "Whitney said that, while walking for exercise one day after dinner in Georgia, with a toothpick in his hand, and being in deep meditation upon the project of constructing an instrument for separating the cotton from the seed, he picked up a boll of cotton which accidentally lay on the ground before him; and in trying the tenacity of the fiber to the seed, he mechanically separated the one from the other with his toothpick. The thought flashed upon his mind that a proper arrangement of metallic points, so as to be brought into contact with the fiber to the exclusion of the seed, would effect his object. This was his cue, and the invention of the saw-gin was the result."

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It is not generally known that South Carolina was the first State to buy the patent rights for Whitney's gin for use by its citizens, paying him therefor \$50,000, the largest amount paid by any State. Moreover, when Whitney's patent right was violated by Arthur Fort of Georgia and the case went into the Federal Court, it was William Johnson, of South Carolina, associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who in an exceedingly strong decision upheld Whitney as the inventor of the cotton gin. This was a most important judgment to Whitney.

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In a letter to the Commercial Convention of the South at Charleston in 1854, J. J. Seibels, United States charge d'affaires at Brussels, advocated a better, more direct market for Southern products in Europe. He pointed out that 100 bales of cotton, direct from the United States, would at  $8\frac{3}{4}$  cents a pound bring \$3,535 at Liverpool, but that costs of receiving and forwarding would be \$80.85 in the United States and \$943.01 in Liverpool, making the total of the charges \$1,023.86, or nearly one-third of the sale price.

The claim that the first cotton mill in America was built at Beverley, Massachusetts, in 1787, is yet open to question. August Kohn, in his highly valuable monograph on the cotton mills of South Carolina, asserts that, "when the true history of cotton mills is written, it will be found that South Carolina was probably the very first State to undertake the development of cotton manufacturing." White cotton goods, made in the proportion of 12 yards to one pound of cotton, were manufactured in St. David's Parish as early as 1768. The Charles Town Gazette in 1769 reported that "many of the inhabitants of the north and eastern parts of this province have this winter clothed themselves in their own manufactures." Governor Glen in 1748 declared in an official communication that a few linens, like those of Ireland, were made by the Irish township of Williamsburg. Daniel Heyward, father of one of the South Carolina signers of the Declaration of Independence, said in a letter in 1777: "My manufactory goes on bravely, but fear the want of cards will put a stop to it, as they are not to be got; if they were, there is not the least doubt but that we could make 6,000 yards of good cloth in the year from the time we began." In the South Carolina and American General Gazette in 1777 it was stated: "We are well informed that a planter to the northward, who three months ago had not a negro that could either spin or weave, has now 30 hands constantly employed, from whom he gets 120 yards of a good, wearable stuff, made of woolen and cotton, every week. He has only one white woman to instruct the negroes in spinning and one man to instruct in weaving. He expects to have it in his power not only to clothe his own negroes, but soon to supply his neighbors."

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In 1787, Mrs. Ramage, a widow, established on James Island a regular cotton mill, operated by mule power. In this connection, it is interesting to note that South Carolina had some of the first women business executives in America. Mrs. Elizabeth Timothy, who, after the death of her husband, its proprietor, published the South Carolina Gazette from 1738 to 1757, was the first American newspaperwoman. Eliza Lucas not only ran three plantations in South Carolina, but also was the first person to plant indigo in this State. At one time it was our principal crop. Miss Lucas married Chief Justice Pinckney and was the mother of two of our illustrious soldiers and statesmen, Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. One of the earliest and finest expressions of love for South Carolina

came from Harriott Pinckney, daughter of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, when the family moved to England until the sons could be educated there. The seven-year-old South Carolina girl was taken to see the Princess of Wales and her daughter. The princess took her by the hand, kissed her and asked her how she liked England. The loyal little Carolinian answered, "Not so well as Carolina."

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The City Gazette of Charleston in 1797 published an obituary notice concerning a Mr. Pierce who died suddenly on the plantation of Alexander R. Chisholm near Beaufort. Following is a quotation from it: "The inhabitants of this State, but particularly the cultivators of cotton, have to lament the loss of this most useful and extraordinary mechanical genius. Mr. Pierce arrived not long since from the Paterson Cotton Manufactory in the Jerseys and had very nearly completed a most astonishing water machine for ginning, spinning and weaving of cotton, which he had brought to such perfection as led him to conceive he would obtain the very high premium offered by the English East India Company for the best model of a machine for the ginning of that article."

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So far as I know, the first textile mill in upper South Carolina was a fulling and dressing mill for fine and coarse woollens on Fishing Creek, near the Catawba River. At this mill woollens were dried, pressed and finished with great neatness by artists from Great Britain. It was in existence prior to July 1, 1790.

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In 1802, John Drayton, once governor of the State, gave in his book, "A View of South Carolina," an account of an early cotton mill, as well as of the manufactures in the upper part of the State.

He said: "Some years ago a cotton manufactory was established by Mr. Benjamin Waring near Statesborough, which bid fair to rise into consideration. Its carding and spinning machines were of extensive powers; and some excellent corduroys and other Manchester cotton stuffs were spun and woven at this manufactory. It was, however, soon perceived that the price of labor was too great to permit its goods to stand any competition with those of similar qualities which were imported from Great Britain. And this, with a want of public patronage, led to its being discontinued. Indeed, so far as relates to manufactures in general, the inhabitants of this

State find it more convenient to import them from foreign countries than to produce them by their own labor, which they believe can be otherwise more independently and profitably bestowed. Thick population, and a want of lands, must first be incidental to a country before her inhabitants will resort to this mode of supporting themselves, while a more eligible one exists. Hence, where the population of the State is convenient to commerce, the manufacturing business is not at all entered into, importations from abroad supplying all necessary wants. But, as transportation is more difficult to and from the middle and upper country, so necessity has, in a proportionate degree, compelled the inhabitants to provide for their respective wants. And thus a domestic spirit of manufacturing has arisen which much prevails in those parts of the State. The traveler there soon becomes accustomed to the humming music of the hand spinning wheel; and the industry of the loom often meets his eye. Cottons are thus made, both striped, figured, and plain, of ingenious fabrication, as well for clothes, and the table, as for house use; woollens also, of strong nature and decent appearance, are woven and dressed by suitable fulling mills; coarse linens, woolen bed covers, and cotton rugs are also manufactured. With the exception of salt and sugar, the people in the upper parts of the State may be considered independent of foreign support, as their country and their industry support them with all the other necessities of life required by those whose wants are not yet excited by refinements of luxury."

Drayton noted that nankeen cotton was then principally grown in the middle and upper country of the State for family use, but he observed that "it is not in much demand, the white cotton having engrossed the public attention." However, nankeen cloth of good color and very strong texture had been manufactured experimentally in South Carolina.

In an earlier book, "Letters Written During a Tour Through the Northern and Eastern States of America," Drayton voiced a complaint that yet is echoed in South Carolina. Noting that taxes in New York State were very low and that the people of the Palmetto State were still obliged to raise the "enormous" annual tax of forty thousand pounds sterling, "as yet hopeless of any reduction," Drayton wrote, "A contrast of this nature, so much to her disadvantage, so much against the prosperity of a country, throws such a gloom upon me, as here to let the curtain fall."

William A. Schaper in his monograph on "Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina" gives this picture of the early manufactures of the Palmetto State:

"The inland districts, the Up Country districts, which were landlocked, developed a diversified industry before the War of the Revolution. They relied on the household and the small shop for their supply of manufactured goods. Production was, in the main, for the household, not for the market. The surplus alone was marketed to secure such articles as salt, spices, and other things that neither the household nor the cross-road shop could supply. On the other hand, the planters who produced the staples were located on or near the watercourses and they produced mainly for the market, and the foreign market at that. Their shops were in Europe. Whatever they needed they bought. This was the rule. So striking was this contrast that the Low Country was generally spoken of as having 'agricultural interests.' The Up Country was called a 'Manufacturing section.'

"Throughout the Revolutionary period, the saw mills, flour mills, foundries, rolling and slitting mills and gun shops of the Up Country increased in number and activity. The first systematic report on manufacturing in South Carolina, made in 1814, is interesting in showing the location of manufacturing activity. There were 255 blacksmiths in the State, of whom 205 were located in the Up Country; 83 tanneries, of which 70 were in the Up Country; 202 flour mills, of which all but eight were in the Up Country; 65 saw mills, only one of which was in the Low Country; 1,458 distilleries, only 12 of which were in the Low Country. There were 3,083,188 yards of cotton cloth produced by families yearly, all in the Up Country except 121,430 yards produced in Williamsburg, Horry and Beaufort. The households also produced 181,636 yards of mixed cotton and woolen goods, none of which was produced in the Low Country, except 5,033 yards in Williamsburg. All-wool goods, amounting to 2,690 yards, were produced in the Up Country. There were 293 hands in South Carolina employed in establishments making leather, soap, candles, cotton yarn, agricultural implements, flour, carriages, edge tools, whiskey, muskets, tinware and earthen ware. Some concerns, employing 102 hands, engaged in making leather and candles, were located in Charleston; the rest were all in the Up Country.

"The sudden rise of cotton as a profitable staple changed all this. The inland farmers quit raising grain and other foodstuffs mainly for the household and produced cotton for export. They built better roads, improved river navigation and constructed canals to make the market more accessible. Industry became less and less diversified and more concentrated in raising cotton. The results of the advance of cotton were many and far-reaching. It revolutionized the system of industry in the middle and Up Country. It gave a new lease of life to slavery by making it immensely profitable in the extensive uplands of the South."

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President Evins last night discussed the necessity for wider consumption of cotton goods in the South. In 1808 the members of the South Carolina legislature resolved to attend the sessions dressed in homespun. During the Nullification excitement in South Carolina, there was a strong movement for the use of domestic manufactures. George McDuffie pulled off his broadcloth coat and gave it to his servant, saying that it was fit only for the livery of slaves. Waddy Thompson, then solicitor and afterward minister to Mexico, said he would eat snow birds and walk around his circuit on foot rather than eat Northern food or ride a Kentucky horse.

In 1812 certain persons sent a petition to the legislature of South Carolina praying State aid to enable them to establish a cotton manufactory. The committee to which the petition was referred reported that what was intended was a manufactory in Greenville district for carding, spinning and weaving cotton, the machinery to be impelled by water, the number of spindles to be employed to be not less than 500, which it was calculated would prepare thread sufficient for weaving 250 yards of cloth per day. The petitioners asked a loan from the State of \$10,000, which was to be repaid with seven per cent. interest, one-half at the expiration of two years and the balance at the end of three years, payment to be secured by a mortgage of real estate of not less than \$100,000 in value. The committee said that it was impressed with the importance of encouraging domestic manufactures and recommended appropriation of the loan. The legislature agreed to the report and provided the aid desired.

There were several instances in which the State gave aid to cotton mills and other manufactures.



Not many South Carolinians are aware of the fact that a cotton manufacturer served as governor of South Carolina. He was David Rogerson Williams of Society Hill. He was elected without his knowledge and was notified when, clad in brown jeans, he was walking at the head of one of his ox-wagons near his home. He had a distinguished record as a representative in the Congress. After he had delivered his inaugural address, one of the legislators from Newberry said to another, "That is none of your little d——d 'raccoon governors!" He gave the State an excellent administration. His mill, at which cotton yarn was spun, at one time had as its superintendent a full-blooded negro. That Williams had his troubles is indicated by his statement in a letter to a friend about his mill: "I tremble for the effects of a dry September. Not a fire had occurred at the factory, but the d——n measles had broke out at least."

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Even casual perusal of our early agricultural journals discloses that droughts have not been uncommon in South Carolina. In 1845 Joel R. Poinsett, who was a strong advocate of more manufactures for the State, noted that it had just been afflicted with a general dearth and drought. Therefore, he advocated a system of irrigating the upper districts by the mountain streams which flowed through them.

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James H. Hammond, governor and United States Senator from South Carolina, as well as one of the most famous champions of our slavery system, in 1849 delivered a notable address before the South Carolina Institute in Charleston. It was a powerful appeal for the increase of cotton manufacturing. Pointing out that the prosperity of the State was decaying because of the steady decline in the price of cotton and the emigration of planters and slaves to newer sections, he made out a strong case for the necessity of manufactures. It was essential, he said, to overcome ignorance and prejudice against the mechanic arts.

Here are some quotations from his address:

"Merchants and manufacturers, next to lawyers, have always been the first to 'snuff tyranny in the tainted breeze,' and foremost in resisting it. . . . Already the South, through the almost unnoticed enterprise of a few of her citizens, more than supplies her own consumption of coarse cotton, and ships both yarn and cloths, with fair profit, to Northern markets. Yet the political influence of

the manufacturers of the South is nothing. It cannot send a single representative to Congress, perhaps not even to a State legislature. . . . In the South few factories have fairly got under way. They have had to struggle with the obstacles incident to every new business, and with prejudices. . . . Wherever men can work the most, and, under a just and secure government, live at least expense, there, in the long run, labor must be cheapest. In England factory labor is now limited by law to 60 hours a week. In our Northern States, the average of available weekly labor is estimated at 73½ hours—in the Middle States at 75½ hours, and, the further South we come, the more it is susceptible of increase. Cold, ice and snow rarely present impediments to working in the cotton region, and the steady heat of our summers is not so prostrating as the short but frequent and sudden bursts of Northern summers. If driven to that necessity, there is no doubt we can extend our hours of labor beyond any of our rivals. The necessary expenses of the Southern laborer are not near so great as are those of one in Northern latitudes. He does not require as much, nor as costly clothing, nor as expensive lodgings, nor the same quantity of food, nor even an equal amount of food. All the fermented and distilled liquors which, in cold climates, are in some sort necessities, are here uncalled for and injurious indulgences. Cornbread and bacon, as much as the epicure may sneer at them, with fresh meat only occasionally, and a moderate use of garden vegetables, will, in this region at least, give to the laborer greater strength of muscle and constitution, enable him to undergo more fatigue, and insure him longer life and more enjoyment of it than any other diet. And these, indeed, with coffee, constitute the habitual food of the great body of the Southern people.”

Hammond pointed out that the average rate of factory wages in the South was already lower than at the North, and but little higher than in England. He noted also that, despite the South's lack of experience and other disadvantages, the Southern mills were already producing better yarns and cloths, of the qualities attempted, than the Northern manufacturers, and were successfully competing with them. For example, No. 14 sheeting at Northern factories cost 5.26 per yard with cotton at 6 cents a pound there, yet the Graniteville mill in South Carolina had not been in operation nine months before it turned out precisely the same cloth at 4.84 cents per yard, with cotton at 7 cents a pound here. And these very goods,

made at Graniteville, took the first premium at the exhibition in Philadelphia. Hammond doubted that it would be safe and wise to use negro labor in cotton factories, for he feared that such a policy might lead to serious trouble or emancipation. As the alternative, he pointed out that there were in the State at least 35,000 available whites who could not adequately support themselves, most of them in agricultural pursuits, who would seize the opportunity to work in cotton mills. "The example thus set of continuous and systematic industry among those to whom it has heretofore been unknown," said Hammond, "cannot fail to produce the most beneficial effects, not only on their own class, but upon all the working classes of the State."

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H. C. Beach and Company, New York commission merchants, prepared statistical charts in 1853 relating to the fluctuations in prices of raw material and manufactured goods for the period from 1847 to 1852 which showed that the average price of fair upland cotton for six years had been 10.44 cents; for heavy brown sheeting, 7.25; for heavy brown drillings, 7.56; for printing cloths, 4.66.

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From 1800 to 1839 the price of cotton averaged a fraction over 17 cents. In 1840 the price dropped to 9 cents, continuing to decline to the 1846 average of 5.63 cents.

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In 1852, South Carolina was reported as having 18 cotton productive establishments, less than any other Southern State, save Alabama and Arkansas. Virginia had 27, Georgia 35, Tennessee 33, Alabama 12, North Carolina 28, Arkansas 3. Massachusetts topped the list with 213, Pennsylvania was second with 208, Rhode Island third with 158, and Connecticut fourth with 128.

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When the Southern Commercial Convention in the fifties recommended reduction of the Southern cotton crop because of overproduction, Gov. Whitmarsh B. Seabrook and Judge John Belton O'Neill, as a committee of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina, reported that "there cannot be an overproduction of an article which is annually consumed" and that "if the production of cotton in the North American States were reduced one-half, the amount of misery which it would cause can hardly be realized," for "the cotton planter supports millions of human beings and clothes

hundreds of millions more." Consequently, "let him extend his philanthropic labors, he will be benefited by them, and countless thousands will call him blessed." The committee said that another strong inducement to South Carolina to persevere in cultivating cotton was that it was then highly probable that very many planters in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas would in the future direct their attention to tobacco and sugar.

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In the ante-bellum period, South Carolina mills experimented to a limited extent with slave labor. The most conspicuous case was that of the Saluda factory near Columbia. It used such labor exclusively and in 1851 had 158 negro operatives. "But, whether from the incapacity of the negroes as mill hands or from the accumulation of debt though the purchase of slaves, the company was forced into liquidation at the close of the following year."

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Dr. J. P. Barrett in an address at a meeting of the Greenwood Agricultural Society in 1852 said: "We often behold the cotton field, and the harvest, raised by the sweat of our brows, destroyed by insects which we are utterly incapable of arresting or destroying with our present knowledge." The agricultural journals of the period contain numerous references to such pests as the cotton moth, the cotton caterpillar, the red bug, the cotton bollworm and the cotton louse.

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In 1855 a writer in DeBow's Review noted: "In Tennessee, spinning appears to be the rule, and manufacturing the exception. In Georgia and North Carolina, equal attention is paid to both; whilst in Virginia, South Carolina and Alabama, the manufacture of piece-goods is decidedly more extensively carried on than spinning only."

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In the November, 1858, number of the Farmer and Planter, published at Pendleton, appeared this advertisement by George Schley of Augusta:

"Southern Planter—

Encourage Your Own Manufactures, Now Languishing for  
Want of Your Own Support.

"I take this method of informing you that I am still manufacturing at Bellville Factory, near Augusta, Georgia, a first-rate

article of negro cloth, made of strong, double-twisted cotton warp and pure wool filling, which I warrant to wear longer than any Northern goods. Being one of the pioneers of manufacturing in Georgia, I have had to struggle against a fierce competition from the Massachusetts manufacturers—for their skill could put a good face on an inferior article, which could sell nominally cheaper than I could a faithful article. Hence, merchants as well as planters refuse to encourage Southern enterprise, because Northern goods were offered at a few cents per yard less, overlooking the vast difference in the quality of the material used. Is not now the time for planters to encourage Southern manufacturers, and make us independent of the North, especially when goods are offered at a reasonable price, and of a quality that will give satisfaction? All I ask is, that you will try my goods, and if you should not find them warmer and more durable than goods you have heretofore used, then condemn them. I am also manufacturing white and striped Osnaburgs, and can fill promptly all orders from planters for both woolen and cotton goods at the prices stated below, payable on the first of January, by an order on your factor, to be forwarded to me on receipt of the goods, at the prices stated. Prices: extra heavy twills, 40 cents; plain, 30 cents; striped Osnaburgs, 12½ cents; white Osnaburgs, 11½ cents."

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In an article in the *Charleston Mercury* in 1860 a correspondent complained at length of the want of home patronage for domestic industry, pointing out that the Graniteville factory was in operation ten years before its "excellent and substantial goods" were scarcely known in the district of Edgefield, in which it was situated. Until the last two years, said the writer, few of this factory's goods were sold near home. He doubted that they could be found on the shelves of more than one store out of five in Edgefield. If it was not more convenient, it was more profitable for merchants to send to New York for fabrics not half as good. "It is a remarkable fact that Graniteville goods are more popular in New York and Philadelphia than they are at home." The writer charged that, in order to drive Southern cotton manufactures out of the South, Northern manufacturers were "counterfeiting" them and using cotton waste, dyed and spun into yarn, as a substitute for wool filling in Georgia woolen plains, goods which were then made in large quantities in South Carolina and other Southern States.

The most noteworthy cotton mill in the State before 1860 was that at Graniteville. Its head, William Gregg, was the foremost, most progressive captain of industry of his time in South Carolina. In 1850 former Gov. James H. Hammond estimated that 50,000 out of the 275,000 white inhabitants of the State were not able to make a decent living. "Most of them now follow agricultural pursuits in feeble yet injurious competition with slave labor," he said. This condition was more keenly perceived by Gregg, who asserted that in Charleston alone he saw hundreds of white women in wretched poverty for lack of occupation, and that thousands of South Carolinians never passed a month from birth to death without being "stinted for meat." He scoffed at the idea of needing more negroes from Africa to supply labor. He proposed to abolish the miserable condition of the poorest whites by upbuilding the State's manufacturing industry. Gregg's mill village at Graniteville was the forerunner of our cotton mill communities of the present. His contained 1,000 people, who were provided with "ornamental cottages," gardens, a school, a library and a savings bank. No liquor selling was allowed.

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One of the most striking developments of the period from 1820 to 1860 was the rapid increase in the number of negro slaves. In 1820 the whites far outnumbered the blacks in the Up Country, for there were 156,227 whites to 80,637 negroes, but by 1860 the tables were turned, for then in upper South Carolina there were 168,722 whites to 173,251 negroes. The movement of the negroes to the upper section of the State and their resulting numerical dominance were due, of course, to the vast increase in the cultivation of cotton in that section. In the Low Country the negroes outnumbered the whites during the whole period, as they had done for many years previous. In 1820 the Low Country had 81,163 whites to 184,664 negroes; in 1860 it had 122,578 whites and 239,069 negroes.

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Many Southern leaders in the period preceding the War for Southern Independence were opposed to cotton mills and other manufactures in the South. George McDuffie, noted governor and United States Senator from this State, was one of the partners in the Vacluse mill, which failed for lack of due attention and support from its owners. He became opposed to manufactures. John C. Calhoun was against them, holding that no mechanical enterprise

would succeed in the Palmetto State. Thomas Jefferson in his early days was bitterly opposed to cotton mills. John Randolph of Roanoke said that "the cotton mills in the South would bring yellow fever, not in August merely, but from June to January and from January to June." Langdon Cheves, one of the ablest of our early statesmen and for a season president of the Bank of the United States, said that "manufacturing should be the last resort of industry in every country, for one forced as with us, they serve no interests but those of the capitalists who set them in motion and their immediate localities." Gov. B. F. Perry, a celebrated leader of the Union party in South Carolina, gave this explanation of the hostility of certain Southern public men to manufactures:

"When the Southern States were groaning beneath the exactions of a most unjust and oppressive tariff, levied not for revenue, but for the purpose of fostering Northern manufactures, the heart of South Carolina and her pride revolted so much at the exactions of the Federal government that she actually, through her public men, discountenanced all attempts to engage in manufactures, for fear that the system of protection might become less odious to the people and they would submit and become reconciled."

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Some facts about the revival of the cotton mill industry in South Carolina in the early 80's are given in an enumeration made by A. P. Butler, commissioner of agriculture of the State, in November, 1882. There were 26 cotton mills then, exactly half of which were in Greenville and Spartanburg counties. The names of the mills and the counties in which they were located were: Charleston county, Charleston mill; Orangeburg county, Orange mill; Sumter county, Belmont factory; Aiken county, Langley, Graniteville and Vacluse; Lexington county, Red Bank factory and Saluda mill; Anderson county, Pelzer mill and Pendleton factory; Greenville county, Reedy River Manufacturing Company, Fork Shoals, Huguenot, Camperdown, Piedmont, Pelham Manufacturing Company, Batesville; Spartanburg county, Clifton Manufacturing Company, Fingerville, Valley Falls, Crawfordville, Cedar Hill, Glendale; York county, Cherokee Falls, Rock Hill; Chester county, Cedar Shoals and Fishing Creek.

These mills had a total of 3,418 looms, 181,743 spindles, \$4,084,000 capital, 4,467 employes, paid \$942,700 yearly in wages.

consumed 47,924,273 pounds of cotton, had materials and supplies valued at \$5,219,564, and their products were valued at \$8,147,126.

The dividends then paid had a high range. Of the mills reporting, the highest annual dividend was paid by Langley, 25 per cent. Cedar Shoals in Chester was next with 20, Glendale paid 16, Saluda, Reedy River, Camperdown and Valley Falls paid 12 each, Graniteville, Vacluse, Piedmont and Clifton paid 10. No rate below that figure was reported. The mills which did not report dividends were putting their earnings into improvements, or had not been running long enough to declare dividends, or refused to answer, or had stopped for enlargement. The highest market value of stock reported was 173 for Langley and Graniteville, while Vacluse was a close second at 170. Glendale reported that its stock was not for sale at any price.

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In a paper read in New York in 1857, D. D. Deming rendered this glowing tribute to cotton:

"Great and incalculable is the wondrous power of cotton! It earns the poor man's bread and fills the rich man's pocket. It covers new-born infancy and forms our garments for the grave. We toil for it by day, and lay ourselves down by night, while it refreshes and warms our hearts to the opening prayer of morning. The hopes and fears of millions, born and unborn, cluster around those unsightly cotton bales. It permeates through every department of civilized and, it may be, uncivilized life. It invents cotton gins and spinning jennies, and lifts inventive genius to immortality. It quickens slow-moving industry and sharpens hungry avarice. It enlarges the boundaries of science and adorns art. It fills the imagination of poets and divines, and constructs cunning platforms for statesmen and politicians. It institutes oligarcies, and perpetuates them, while it binds up with its tough fiber the great democratic heart, and shields it from destruction. It freights the ships of commerce, and sends a missionary to every clime, and in the hour of danger barricades our cities, and nobly protects us from pillage and booty. More than this, it has made salubrious and fragrant the once abodes of hideous reptiles and miasma. Wonderful! most wonderful! is the power of cotton! The universe is but a cotton mill, elaborating the necessities of men."

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Since this is the first and may be the last opportunity I shall have to speak to this Association, I wish to add one thing more. In re-



cent years I have interested myself in the public school problems of South Carolina and have studied them as best I could. In the course of this endeavor I have been deeply impressed with the splendid contribution the cotton manufacturers have made to the educational advancement of the Palmetto State.

William Gregg in 1855 reported to his Graniteville stockholders that 79 out of 100 grown girls who came to the mill could neither read nor write, but, he added, "that reproach has long since been removed." In the same spirit, with the same zeal for the intellectual betterment of their people, the cotton manufacturers of our State from the revival of the industry in the early eighties to this hour have voluntarily, gladly and liberally given the children of their communities the best educational opportunities they could supply.

The service thus rendered by the manufacturers to the enlightenment and betterment of the Palmetto State is immeasurable. The mills and their schools have risen together and improved together. I believe that the general excellence of the mill schools has been a most influential factor in the marvelous advance of the public schools of South Carolina in the past decade.

This contribution to the upbuilding of our commonwealth is neither so widely understood nor so thoroughly appreciated as it should be. Let the critics of the cotton mills of South Carolina say what they may, they cannot, I believe, point to a single instance in which a cotton mill management within our borders has ever failed to do the very best it could for the education of its people.

In their steadfast, generous encouragement and maintenance of night, adult and opportunity schools, the cotton mill managements have done more than any other group in the State to remove from it the stain and the shame of widespread illiteracy.

I believe that future historians will pronounce the judgment that in the period from 1880 to this good day the cotton manufacturers of South Carolina did as much to promote the educational betterment of the State as any other group of South Carolinians and that, in so doing, they have rendered and are continuing to render high, enduring, patriotic service in the making of a greater and nobler Palmetto State.











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